



Dacca University Convocation

The Vice-Chancellor's Speech

and

His Excellency

The Chancellor's Speech

July 29th, 1939

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Speech by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Vice-Chancellor, at the Annual Convocation of the University of Dacca, on the 29th July 1939.

YOUR EXCELLENCY AND CHANCELLOR,

It is my first and most pleasant duty to welcome you to this, the most important annual function of the University of Dacca.

Your Excellency is no stranger either to this province or to this University. Bengal remembers with affection and gratitude your long and meritorious services extending over 35 years and I recall with pleasure that in August, 1934, Your Excellency presided over the Convocation of this University as its Chancellor. It is a fitting recognition of your loyal devotion to duty and sense of public spirit that you have been recalled from the retirement you had so fully earned, to hold the reins of Government in this premier province of India where you spent the best years of your active life. This province and this University are looking forward once again to profit by your wise counsel, guidance, and advice.

I would next offer a hearty and cordial welcome to the distinguished visitor who has kindly consented to deliver the Convocation Address. The name of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is a household word all over India, and we are proud to feel that, although she was born and brought up in Hyderabad, Dacca was her ancestral home. Ready and earnest alike in her devotion to the Muses and the Demos, she combines in her person in a pre-eminent degree

the gifts of a poet and a politician. A renowned poet, and President of the Indian National Congress ; it is indeed a rare combination, almost unique in the history of India. Her numerous and eloquent utterances on all subjects concerning the vital problems of India, her long record of public service and sacrifice for the country's cause, and her charming but forceful personality and character have endeared her to the millions of Indian people, and she is justly regarded as heralding a new era of regenerated womanhood in India. We deem it a high honour and great privilege that she has consented to address this solemn gathering at the annual Convocation.

I would also welcome the other distinguished guests who have evinced their genuine interest in the welfare of the University by their presence here to-day and offer them my cordial thanks for the same.

Unfortunately this joyous tone of cordial welcome has to be immediately followed by a melancholy note. It is my painful duty now to refer to the heavy toll that death has taken in our ranks. The death of Lord Brabourne, our beloved Chancellor, has been nothing less than a great public calamity. It gave a rude shock to the whole province and cast a gloom over the people of Bengal which even the lapse of five months has not been able altogether to dispel. He was truly great, great as a man and great as a Governor. Bengal expected much from his mature experience, wise statesmanship, and genuine sympathy for the people. But the cruel hand of death suddenly snatched him away at a time when Bengal had a great need of him. Although during his brief tenure of office he had not the

opportunity of coming into close touch with the affairs of this University he was genuinely solicitous for its welfare and ever anxious to contribute his own share towards this end. On the two occasions I had the privilege of meeting him he asked me about the immediate problems of the University and assured me that this University could always rely upon his active support and sympathy. On behalf of this University I take this opportunity of paying a tribute to the memory of one who was not only its beloved and respected Chancellor, but a true friend, and on behalf of you all I offer our heartfelt condolence to the Lady Brabourne in her deep bereavement.

The cruel hand of death has snatched away not only the head of the institution but also a large number from other ranks and spheres.

Shamsul-Ulema Maulana Md. Ishaque, Lecturer in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, was a distinguished scholar and was regarded by common consent as the most learned exponent of Islamic Sacred Texts in Bengal. His name and fame, however, spread far beyond the frontiers of this province and his death has been an irreparable loss not only to this University but also to the Muslim community of Bengal.

Mr. P. K. Bose was a member of the Court from the foundation of the University and also a member of the Executive Council for six years. He served as the Legal Adviser of the University for about two years and continued in this capacity till the day of his death. His wise counsel and legal acumen were of great help to this University in its formative

period. He was a prominent figure in the public life of Dacca and a distinguished member of the local Bar. His death has removed a great friend and well-wisher of the University and an outstanding personality in the public life of Dacca.

Dr. S. K. Das Gupta served as the Medical Officer of this University from its very foundation. He rendered most distinguished services to the staff and students of the University and the skill and care with which he treated his patients endeared him to all alike. He had a charming personality and assiduously worked for the good of the University. His death has been regarded almost as a personal loss by many members of the University and it would be very difficult to fill the void that has been created by his death.

Mr. Abul Hossain was formerly a teacher of this University and was nominated a member of this Court by His Excellency the Chancellor. He had a promising career at the Bar and his death at a comparatively early age has been deeply mourned by all his friends.

The death of Charuchandra Banerjee, who retired from the service of the University two years ago, has removed a prominent figure from the field of Bengali literature. In recognition of his services to the cause of Bengali literature, the University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts and extended his service for two years even after he had attained the normal age of retirement. He was a reputed author and a successful teacher, and contributed a great deal towards the creation of a literary and æsthetic taste among the students of this University.

The recent railway disaster at Maijdia has caused the death of Birendra Nath Majumdar, the Chairman of the Dacca Municipality and a member of the University Court. By his death Dacca has lost one of its most popular and esteemed leaders.

Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul Hafeez, who died recently, was a member of the illustrious Nawab family of Dacca, and was for some time a member of the Executive Council of this University.

To this long list of painful memory one more was added only three days ago when the University sustained a severe loss by the death of Mr. S. M. Chanda, Lecturer in English and House Tutor of the Dacca Hall. He rendered very valuable services to the University in both these capacities and won the love and esteem of his colleagues and students. On behalf of the University I take this opportunity of conveying to his family our heartfelt condolence at their sad bereavement.

I would now say a few words about the internal administration of the University. After the death of Lord Brabourne, His Excellency Sir Robert Reid, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., acted for the second time as Chancellor of this University. He has recently gone home on leave. During the two short periods he acted as the Chancellor of this University, he took a keen and sympathetic interest in its affairs and I hope that he will shortly return to India to resume his beneficent activities.

There was an important change in the personnel of the administrative staff of the University. Khan Bahadur Md. Yahya, who acted as Treasurer during

1938, has been succeeded by Mr. Abul Muzaffar Ahmed, B.C.L. (Oxon.). In spite of his heavy and onerous official duties Mr. Yahya carried on the responsible task of supervising the financial administration of the University, and I convey to him our cordial thanks for his loyal service. I also welcome the new Treasurer who will, I am sure, keep up the high traditions of his office.

After the death of our Medical Officer, Dr. S. K. Das Gupta, the University decided to create two posts of Medical Officer and Assistant Medical Officer, and Dr. S. K. Mitra, B.Sc., M.B., M.R.C.P. (Edin.) and Dr. Saifuddin Ahmad, M.B., have been appointed respectively to these two offices.

As regards the teaching side Mr. A. K. S. Marghoob Ahmad Taufiq, M.A., has been appointed Reader in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies and Dr. Serajul Huque, M.A., Ph.D. (London), has been appointed Lecturer in his place. Dr. B. N. Roy, M.A., Ph.D., and Mr. A. Hady Talukdar, M.A. (Lond.), have been appointed Lecturers Class I in Philosophy and Dr. N. K. Chatterji, Ph.D. (Allahabad) Lecturer Class I in Botany. In order to improve the standard of spoken English among the students, an innovation has been made by the appointment of an English lady Miss J. J. Mackay, M.A. (Lond.), as Lecturer in English.

Mr. Nanigopal Banerji, Lecturer in Sanskrit, has just retired from service and Dr. R. C. Hazra, M.A., Ph.D. has been appointed in his place. Mr. Banerji was an erudite sanskrit Scholar, trained in the orthodox method, and rendered valuable service to the University.

Professor J. C. Ghosh, Head of the Department of Chemistry, and Provost, Dacca Hall, has been appointed Director of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. While I congratulate him on this high honour which he so eminently deserved, and appreciate the great distinction he has brought upon the University, I cannot but express my sense of the irreparable loss that this University has sustained by his departure. Dr. Ghosh was not only a Chemist of international repute but was also a very successful teacher, a capable organizer, and an administrator of great tact and ability. His high ideals, broad vision, and practical insight enabled the University to expand its activities in many useful directions. Under his fostering care the small department of Chemistry which began with 10 teachers has grown into the biggest Department of the University including agricultural Chemistry, Bio-Chemistry, Botany and Physiology, managed by 26 members of the staff. He had ample opportunities of rendering very useful services even outside the University sphere. Only a few months ago he presided over the Indian Science Congress at Lahore. The Inter-University Board thrice elected him as member of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, and he was one of the most valuable members of this body for a total period of twelve years. He represented this University on various Boards and Committees set up by various local Governments and All-India organisations with a view to developing industries with the help of Science. It is only in the fitness of things that I should take this opportunity of placing on record my own and University's appreciation of the long,

meritorious and loyal services of one who must always be ranked among the few distinguished persons who have made the University of Dacca what it is to-day. I am sure his example will be an abiding inspiration to the staff and students of this University, and I venture to hope that in spite of the long distance that separates us he will never cease to take a keen interest in the progress of this University and always help it with his wise counsel and advice.

We have lost another valuable member by translation to a higher post. Dr. M. Ahmad, Lecturer in Philosophy, has been appointed Principal, Dacca Intermediate College, in the Senior Educational Service. He was a brilliant student of this University and obtained his Doctorate from the University of London. As Lecturer in Philosophy and House-Tutor of Salimulla Muslim Hall he rendered very useful service to the University. Fortunately the sphere of his new activity is so closely associated with the University, that we can still regard him as one of our own. As the Head of a feeder Institution he will, I am sure, continue to render valuable service to the University though in a different capacity.

The number of admission during the last session has been very satisfactory, the total number of students being 1,527 as against 1,369 in the previous session. The number has exceeded all previous records. The number of women students has also increased from 54 to 72.

The academic standard has been ably maintained as will be evidenced by the record of the different academic societies of the University and the research

work carried on by the staff and students of which a detailed account is given in the Annual Report. Valuable work has also been done in the Department of Agricultural Chemistry financed mainly by the Government of India. Dr. P. K. De has made an original investigation of outstanding merit on the importance of algal growth in water-logged paddy fields for the nutrition of rice plants. His paper has been published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of London, and has earned well-merited recognition of the scientific world.

Although results in public examinations should not be regarded as a reliable index, I may mention that the posts of two Deputy Magistrates, fifteen Sub-Deputy Magistrates and one Deputy Superintendent of Police have been secured by the students of this University as a result of the last competitive examinations.

Some teachers of the University have received recognition and distinction from other Universities. Mr. Haridas Bhattacharyya, Head of the Department of Philosophy, delivered the Principal Miller Lectures at Madras on the invitation of the Madras University being the first North Indian to be elected to that Lectureship. Dr. S. R. Khastgir, D.Sc., has been elected a member of the Institute of Radio Engineers in recognition of his work on Wireless at the Dacca University. Three ex-students and now teachers of this University, Dr. A. B. Rudra, Dr. P. K. De and Dr. P. C. Chakravarty, have been awarded the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of London. The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy has been conferred by this University

upon Rajab Ali Mirza and Sailendra Mohan Das Gupta, and the Degree of Doctor of Science upon Sunil Bihari Sen Gupta and Santilal Bandyopadhyaya.

Reference has already been made to a large increase in the number of students. It is gratifying to note that the increase has been far larger in the case of Muslim students. When the University was started in 1921 it had on its roll only 178 Muslim students. Their number during the last session rose to 595 of whom 364 were resident students. When the Salimullah Muslim Hall was built with an accommodation for about three hundred students this University was severely criticised for extravagant expenditure. The events of the last few years have more than justified the policy of the University. It now appears that University authorities underestimated rather than overestimated the extent to which the Muslim population of Bengal would take advantage of the opportunities offered by the University of Dacca for securing higher education to their children. The Salimullah Muslim Hall has justly come to be regarded as the chief centre of Muslim education in Bengal. But a single Muslim Hall is no longer sufficient for the needs of the steadily increasing number of resident Muslim students. The University made temporary arrangements for the residence of students who could not be accommodated in the Salimullah Muslim Hall. But the arrangement was very unsatisfactory, particularly as it denied to a large number of students those cultural benefits and advantages and amenities of a corporate life which the residence of a large number of students in a Hall alone can offer. The

University accordingly applied to the Government for financial assistance to construct a second Muslim Hall with accommodation for two hundred and fifty students. The University is grateful to the Government for having favourably entertained their application and provided a sum of rupees two lakhs and a half for this purpose in the budget of the current financial year. The vacant space to the north-west of the main University Building, adjoining the Bakshi Bazar Road on the West, has been selected as the site of the new Muslim Hall. The detailed plans and estimates are being prepared and rough plans have already been forwarded to the Public Works Department for their approval. I must state, however, that the amount already sanctioned by the Government would not be adequate for a suitable building with its necessary adjuncts such as a common Prayer Hall and a Dining Hall. I hope Your Excellency's Government will provide a further amount in the next year's Budget in order to enable the University to construct a suitable building for the new Muslim Hall. The provision of University education for the Muslim students is an object of national importance and must not be looked at from a sectional point of view. Politicians of every shade of opinion have stressed the need of a proper understanding and growth of harmony and good will between the two great communities of Bengal. It is my firm conviction that nothing would facilitate this task better than the spread of higher education among the Muslims. For so long as the intellectual attainments and educational standards of the two communities are not brought, more or less, to the same level, there cannot be a solid foundation for

that communal amity which we all have so much at heart. This University is steadily fulfilling this great need of Bengal in an ever-increasing measure and therefore places its demands upon public revenue for the construction of a suitable Muslim Hall on a broad view of public policy. It can justly claim that actual facts and figures have proved beyond all doubt that a residential Hall has been of immense benefit to the Muslim students, and what is more important, that Muslim community in Bengal has appreciated those benefits. It would indeed be a great pity if the full advantages of a new Muslim Hall cannot be enjoyed by the Muslim students for want of a comparatively small amount of money, and I earnestly appeal to Your Excellency's Government to provide the necessary funds either in a supplementary grant or in the next year's budget.

The accommodation in Women's Hostel having proved inadequate it has been removed to a larger building. But the arrangement can hardly be regarded as satisfactory. Apart from the difficulty of providing for a gradually increasing number of resident women students, the supervision of the resident students and the development of a healthy corporate life among them has proved a task of great difficulty on account of the paucity of women teachers in the University. The Government have under contemplation the construction of a building for the Eden College and hostel at Ramna, and the University approached them for setting aside a separate block in this hostel for about fifty women students of the University. The Government have intimated that the proposal of the University will be considered when the building scheme of the

Eden School and College is definitely settled, and it is hoped that the problem of the women's hostel will be solved at least for some years to come, as soon as the new building is ready. Ultimately, when the number of resident women students and women teachers is considerably increased, it would be necessary and desirable to establish a women's Hall in the University.

The University has all along been fully alive to its duty and responsibility in respect of helping its own graduates to secure employment. An Employment Bureau was started two years ago with this object in view. It had to encounter one great difficulty at the outset by the refusal of the European firms in Calcutta to treat this Bureau on the same footing as the Appointment Board of the Calcutta University. I am glad to be able to state that as a result of prolonged negotiations with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Secretary of this Body has sent a circular letter to all the European firms associated with it stating that "members desiring to fill vacancies through the medium of the Universities should co-operate with the Dacca University Employment Bureau in the same way as with the Calcutta University Information and Appointments Board". I express on behalf of the University our cordial thanks to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for opening the avenues of employment in a large number of firms to our own graduates.

I should now like to say a few words about the two big schemes of expansion, *viz.*, the establishment of a Faculty of Agriculture and a Faculty of Medicine. The foundation of the Agricultural

Institute at Manipur brought into prominence the question of establishing a Degree course in Agriculture in this University. After preliminary discussion at Dacca between the representatives of the University and the Department of Agriculture the Government arranged a conference in Calcutta attended by three members of the University and four representatives of the Government. The conference unanimously recommended that a Faculty of Agriculture should be instituted in this University and submitted concrete proposals regarding a course of study leading to a Degree in Agriculture to be provided jointly by the University and the Department of Agriculture. The conference also defined the respective duties, functions and spheres of activity of these two bodies. This happy solution of a long-standing problem has been a matter of great gratification to the University. We have approached the Government for providing necessary funds in order to enable us to give effect to the proposals made by the conference, which we understand, have also been approved by the Government. The University confidently hopes that the Faculty of Agriculture will ere long be an accomplished fact.

Satisfactory progress has also been made in regard to the proposed Faculty of Medicine. In my Convocation Address last year I referred to the decision of the Government to appoint an expert committee to examine the whole project. This committee met in Dacca in February last and, having considered the question in its general aspects and examined the probable sites for the construction of laboratories and hospitals, appointed two sub-committees to draw up detailed plans and estimates on the basis of the

general principles approved by them. The sub-committee consisting of Calcutta members and including the Surgeon-General and the Principals of the two Medical Colleges in Calcutta had several sittings and have almost completed their work. Major Linton, the Civil Surgeon of Dacca, has prepared, at the request of the committee, detailed plans for the extension of hospitals. It is now proposed to hold the final meeting of the committee at Dacca at an early date, and it is confidently hoped that the report of the committee will be in the hands of the Government before the Puja Holidays.

Before concluding this review I must refer to a question which has been a source of considerable uneasiness to the authorities of the University. As is well-known, the only source of income of this University, apart from the fees paid by the students, is the annual recurring grant by the Government. This grant was made statutory and non-votable by an amendment of the Dacca University Act in 1925. It therefore came upon us as a great surprise when the annual grant was put to the vote of the Assembly during the last Budget session. It now appears that the change was not due to any deliberate policy but simply because the Government did not follow some technical procedure laid down in the Government of India Act.

It is unnecessary for me, at the present stage, to dilate upon the necessity of a fixed statutory grant in order to stabilise the financial position of the University and to enable it to adopt a definite policy and programme. We do not know of any reason for reversing the wise decision of the previous Governments that this University should be placed above

party politics in the Legislative Assembly. I hope Your Excellency's Government will soon restore the *status quo* by placing the annual recurring grant of the University on a statutory basis.

This somewhat long review of the internal affairs of the University would perhaps appear tedious to some. But, according to an old established convention, advantage is taken of this solemn occasion and notable gathering to make known to the outside world the current affairs and problems of the University as well as its hopes and aspirations. And it is likely to prove a wise device. For in recent years the University has not had a very large amount of popular enthusiasm and support behind it, and in this respect it might suffer still more by default unless it took every opportunity to commend itself to the sympathy of the public and, if possible, to enlist their active support and good will by proving its usefulness. Happily there are already signs of a favourable change in the general outlook. The democratic Governments set up in various provinces have shown recently by their actions that they greatly value the expert advice and assistance which a University teacher may offer them in matters of practical administration and the solution of intricate problems concerning the material and moral welfare of the country. The practice of appointing University men on the various committees appointed by the Government and other important organisations is particularly welcome as it affords the University a splendid opportunity to take its due share and play its proper part in the work of national regeneration. The true aim and object of the University is no doubt the pursuit of

the higher knowledge and the development of personality and character with a view to the attainment of the most perfect discipline of mind, body, and intellect. But it should be borne in mind that education cannot and should not be divorced from real life, and the best use of the intellectual and moral discipline, imparted by the University training, is to place it unreservedly at the disposal of the society in which we live. The teachers and students of the University must regard themselves, from a broader point of view, as humble workers for the social welfare, and each should seek to serve the community in the best manner possible for him. The spirit of service should be a strong stimulus to our activities and it is only in this way that the University can take its proper place in the economy of national institutions. We shall cheerfully do our bit, whether we are called upon to clear the water-hyacinth, help the spread of literacy among the adults, or solve some acute economic or industrial problems. The idealism and youthful energy of the students, and the knowledge, wisdom, and experience of teachers should all be pooled together for the service of the community, and we should not mind whether the part assigned to us is high or low, great or small.

I should particularly emphasise the importance of this aspect of University education to you, the graduates of this University, who have assembled here to-day to take your Diplomas. I congratulate you all on your success in the examinations. Those of you who would prosecute further studies in this University will, I hope, profit by past experience and put forth your best effort to get as much out of

the University as you can. To those who have finished their University education and are going out to the wide world to seek a career for themselves my first words are those of hope and sympathy.

I sympathise with you in the difficulties that most of you are sure to face when you go out of the snug and safe bosom of your Alma Mater into the rough walks of life that stretch in tortuous curves to a dreary and uncertain goal. Nothing is more tragic than the spectacle of young men, wasting their talents and energy in despair, and having no opportunity of using them in a manner which would earn bare livelihood for themselves, not to speak of bringing wealth and prosperity to the community. Bengal is now passing through such an acute state of unemployment, and it hits the University graduates the hardest of all. You are caught in the midst of a period of transition in all spheres of life,—economic, political, moral. The old order has disappeared, and the new one has not yet emerged in a clear and definite form. But even in this gloomy prospect there is a ray of hope. For such a situation offers insuperable difficulties as well as splendid opportunities, particularly to the creative intellect and disciplined mind. Your University education ought to equip you with both of these, so that you may adapt yourselves to the changed environments, and forge new weapons for the new type of struggle that awaits you. The keynote of this new fight is the all-important fact that you have now to reckon with a newly awakened Demos which is casting off its slumber and lethargy of ages. You should be ready to give up the old aristocratic ideas and habits and cease to

regard yourselves as members of a privileged class. Aristocracy of birth, wealth, and intellect must now give way to the aristocracy of number. You must now think in terms of the mass and adapt your thoughts and ways accordingly.

The University education, instead of dividing you from the mass, should unite you with them in a spirit of service and fellowship. By living with them and working with them you should try to divert the blind impotent energy, that is surging in their breast and might easily prove a source of incalculable harm, into fruitful channels beneficial to mankind. The spirit of service to which I referred above, should not be regarded as a mere philanthropic and humanitarian work, but it is a vital part of the complex process that is necessary to bring back the society into a normal state of equilibrium. In that regenerated society you would find your due place and share of work, and the legitimate means of earning your livelihood. It is no doubt difficult for a young man, faced with want or misery, to think in terms of general good rather than his own immediate needs. But it has to be done if you are ultimately to succeed in your efforts. The failure of all attempts to find a solution for the unemployment of young graduates is perhaps due to the fact that we have always thought in terms of the individual sufferers, and not treated it as a general problem affecting the society as a whole. Without a general levelling up of the mass of people there would be no permanent relief to the educated youths suffering from unemployment. The roof and the walls of our social structure are shaky because the foundation is sapped. No amount of

artificial support would make the house steady so long as the foundation is not properly strengthened. Nay even the whole structure might tumble down if we continue to ignore the foundation. Thus philanthropy and self-interest should alike urge you to engage yourselves earnestly in the service of the people. Even those who are comparatively well-placed in life should not forget their duty in this respect, by doing which they would help not only their less fortunate brethren but, ultimately, their own class. The spirit of service and self-sacrifice is no new ideal to our country. For ages it has been considered as the highest virtue and aim of life and it is time that we should once more revive this noble ideal. Nobody of persons is more likely to respond to the call of a new ideal than the educated youth, and I repeat my appeal for this great ideal to you, and, through you, to your numerous compeers all over our country. I conclude the address with the fervent hope that by pursuing this ideal you may earn competence for yourselves and, at the same time, help in the regeneration of our motherland.

***His Excellency Sir John Woodhead's
Address at the Convocation of the
Dacca University on the 29th of July
1939.***

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

When I presided at your Convocation five years ago my service in Bengal was drawing to a close, and I little thought that it would fall to my lot to meet you here again in the year 1939. But, as I said on that previous occasion, I have known Eastern Bengal for a very long time. I spent the earlier, and probably the more impressionable years of my service in it and I always feel a close personal interest in the progress of its institutions—amongst which I am not alone in ranking the University as one of the most important. The position now occupied by the University in the educational life of the people of this Province must be a source of pride to everybody in Dacca and it gives me the greatest pleasure to be associated with it once again. I should add that this pleasure does not arise solely from renewing old associations and from meeting old friends but also from the realisation that this young and vigorous University has been able to secure so eminent a person as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to deliver the Convocation Address. I am not going to attempt to re-echo the eloquent tribute that has already been paid to her—you all know her far too well for that—nor am I going to stand for long between you and the address you are all anxiously

awaiting, but I should like to emphasise, both personally and on behalf of the University, how glad I am she has been able to come to-day.

I must thank you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, for the appreciative way you have referred to the late Lord Brabourne. Although I only had the privilege of meeting him on three or four occasions it has not taken me long to realise how firm a hold he had on the trust and affection of the people of Bengal and, I have good reason to believe, of the people of other parts of India also. Although he never visited the University—his term as acting Viceroy coincided with the annual visit of the Governor to Dacca—he was fully conversant with the problems of this University and was always ready to hear and discuss matters relating to the welfare of the younger generation. I also join with you in mourning the death of so many distinguished members and ex-members of the University whose services, whether at Dacca or further afield, can ill be spared. Other losses to the staff have occurred through transfers or promotions and here at least we may console ourselves by the realisation that Dacca's loss has been somebody else's gain. It is perhaps invidious to mention particular cases but I feel I shall be ungracious if I do not recall the great services rendered to the University by Professor S. C. Ghosh and the honour he has brought by his appointment as Director of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore.

You have referred, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, during the course of your address to a number of administrative problems which, as Chancellor, I am just as anxious as you are, to see satisfactorily resolved.

But problems as a whole have a habit of evading a facile solution and those to which you have referred are no exception to the rule, though, in some cases, we can derive satisfaction from the fact that real progress has been made.

Towards the provision of another Muslim Hall Government has been able to render material assistance by a generous grant of Rs. 2½ lakhs. Whether the further grant for which you have, as it were, staked a claim to-day, can be justified, is a matter on which Government is obviously not in a position to commit itself, one way or another, until all the detailed plans and estimates are available and have been carefully scrutinised.

Another problem, equally as pressing, is that of accommodation for women students. The recent increase in their numbers, to which a reference has already been made to-day, is a sign that it cannot be shelved much longer. It is not possible, I am afraid, to allot to the University, a separate block of the new Hostel which is to be attached to the Eden College, as the plans provide for one rectangular building. I am assured however that any proposal to allot limited accommodation in the building, to women students of the University, will be favourably considered.

Your desire to have your own Faculty of Agriculture dates back for many years and is one to which attention has repeatedly been drawn on occasions such as this. Five years ago, whilst commenting favourably on the idea, I was compelled to draw pointed attention to the then precarious financial state of the Province and to discuss it in, at any rate, extremely cautious terms. To-day the project

is much further advanced ; Government has approved of it and has agreed to give financial assistance. It is to be hoped that this will finally result in an effective course of training being drawn up. On the question of the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine, to which reference has also been made to-day, Government must clearly keep an open mind until the full deliberations of the Committee, which is at present considering the question, are available.

The last point to which you referred, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, is one to which we all attach great importance, I mean the question of the grant made each year by Government to the University. Whether or not this should be a fixed statutory grant must depend ultimately on the decision of the Legislature. Meanwhile however the question has been under examination in the Finance Department which has already considered the advisability of introducing a bill, in the next Session, making the grant to the University charged on the revenues of the Province.

I have already taken up far too much of your time but there is just one more thing I would like to say—particularly now to those of you who are about to quit the University and seek their future in a competitive world. Your Vice-Chancellor has told you that you should cease to regard yourselves as members of a privileged class—that now-a-days the aristocracy of birth, wealth and education must give way to the aristocracy of numbers. At the same time I would enjoin on you to remember that democracies, no less than other and more authoritative forms of Government, require guidance and leadership. You, who have had the advantage of a University education, are still in reality a privileged class

not simply because you have attended a University and are permitted by statute to write 'B.A.' or 'B.L.' after your names, but because you have better potential opportunities than others, of filling the role of leadership which is still so very necessary in the world to-day. If you squander this opportunity recklessly you are throwing away something which is of value not only to yourselves but to the community in general, if you conserve and apply it wisely, you will, in the fullest sense, serve the best interests of your country.

And now ladies and gentlemen I will not delay you any longer, and I have great pleasure in asking Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to address the Convocation.

